

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are currently pending in the present application.

An amendment has been proposed to claim 1 for discussion at the August 29, 2003, interview. Please do not enter this proposed amendment at this time.

The proposed amendment to claim 1 is believed to overcome the following rejections for the reasons given below.

1. The rejection of claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, since the claim amendment now requires no input of heat thereby removing the reference to "minimal input of heat" which formed the basis for this rejection.
2. The rejection of claims 1-2 and 4-11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent no. 6,123,964 (Asgharnejad et al.) since Asgharnejad et al. does not teach or suggest a drying step with no input of heat.
3. The rejection of claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Asgharnejad et al. since Asgharnejad et al. does not teach or suggest a drying step with no input of heat and the examples of the present application demonstrate a significant improvement in certain properties of the granules when drying is carried out with no input of heat in the first drying step.
4. The rejection of claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Asgharnejad et al. in view of U.S. Patent no. 6,384,020 (Flanner) for the reasons given above with respect to the rejection of claims 1-13 over Asgharnejad et al., taken alone, since claim 3 depends from claim 1 and thus includes all of the limitations of claim 1.
5. The rejection of claims 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Asgharnejad et al. in view of U.S. Patent no. 5,725,886 (Erkoboni) for the reasons given above with respect to the rejection of claims 1-13 over Asgharnejad et al., taken alone, since claims 12-13 depend from claim 1 and thus include all of the limitations of claim 1.

The applicant would also like to discuss the rejection of claims 14-16 and 18-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent no. 6,149,943 (McTeigue et al.) during the personal interview, as well as discuss the rejection of claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent no. 6,149,943 (McTeigue et al.) in view of U.S. Patent no. 6,117,451 (Kumar).

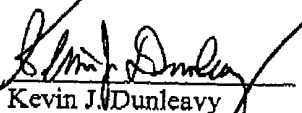
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No. 2294 P. 8/8

Attorney Docket No.: CARD-1002US

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions regarding the proposed amendment. I look forward to meeting with you at 3:00 p.m. on August 29, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,


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